

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2468

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PDEV, EG, ET
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN RUMORS ON ETHIOPIAN SITUATION

REF: CAIRO 14090

SUMMARY: INVITATIONS TO BREZHNEV AND CASTRO TO PAY OFFICIAL VISITS TO ETHIOPIA, RUMORED PRESSURE FROM ETHIOPIA'S "FRIENDS" TO CREATE PARTY AND APPROACH OF 4TH ANNIVERSARY OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION IN SEPTEMBER APPEAR TO HAVE GIVEN RISE TO SPECULATION THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IS IMMINENT. THIS SPECULATION SEEMS SOMEWHAT PREMATURE. ON ERITREA, ETHIOPIANS STILL APPEAR COMMITTED, IN SHORT TERM, TO MILITARY SOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

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1. SPECULATION BY PDRY AMBASSADOR IN ADDIS ABOUT IMMINENCE OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC TO BE CONCEALED BY VISIT OF BREZHNEV, CASTRO AND RUBAYYI ALI DURING 4TH ANNIVERSARY OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, APPEARS TO BE EQUAL MEASURES OF WISHFUL THINKING AND DIPLOMATIC RUMORING. WHILE SCENARIO OF MENGISTU INSTALLATION AS PARTY CHIEF AND PRESIDENT IS PLAUSI-

BLE; EVEN RESIDENT CUBAN DIPLOMAT BELIEVES ESTABLISHMENT OF PARTY IS AT LEAST ONE YEAR DISTANT AND POSSIBLY MORE. INVITATIONS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED TO CASTRO AND BREZHNEV TO MAKE OFFICIAL VISITS HERE AND POSSIBLY RUBAYYI AS WELL, BUT THESE WOULD MORE LIKELY BE TO RETURN MENGISTU'S VISITS AND ENHANCE LATTER'S PRESTIGE, RATHER THAN TO CONSECRATE PARTY.

2. ON ERITREA, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT "INCREASING TENDENCY WITHIN PMGSE TOWARD NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT," AS EGYPTIANS APPARENTLY BELIEVE. TO CONTRARY, MILITARY BUILD-UP CONTINUES IN AREAS CONTIGUOUS WITH ERITREA AND PMGSE APPEARS COMMITTED TO LAUNCHING OFFENSIVE ACTIONS INTO ERITREA. IT IS TRUE ETHIOPIANS HAVE DEMONSTRATED SOME DESIRE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH SUDAN, WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED BY EGYPTIANS AS DESIRE FOR NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IN ERITREA. HOWEVER, ETHIOPIANS HAVE SHOWN LITTLE WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE WITH ERITREANS IN EXCHANGE FOR SUDANESE RESTRAINT OF ERITREAN ACTIVITIES WITHIN SUDAN.

3. FORMATION OF NATIONAL WORKERS' PARTY CONTINUES TO BE TOPIC OF DIPLOMATIC SPECULATION, BUT GIVEN RECENT PMGSE ACTIONS AGAINST TRADE UNION (AETU) AND MARXIST-LENINIST GROUP ME'ISON, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT POSSIBILITY PARTY COULD BE CREATED AS EARLY AS

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SEPTEMBER. DIRG STILL SEEMS PRE-OCCUPIED BY MILITARY MATTERS (ERITREA, OGADEN) AND APPEARS UNWILLING TO CEDE ANY OF ITS AUTHORITY TO CIVILIANS. EMBASSY IS NOT YET AWARE OF ANY CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF PARTY IS IMMINENT, BUT IS FOLLOWING SITUATION CLOSELY.

MATHERON

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